

# MISSIONARIES OF ST.FRANCIS DE SALES – MSFS

## SOUTH WEST PROVINCE – INDIA

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Circular MK/15

28<sup>th</sup> July 2008

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In spite of her painful diseases, she was cheerful to the last and the smile of innocence never parted from her lips. She considered herself a sacrificial offering at God's altar and believed that suffering refines us and makes us worthy of Him.

On 28 July we celebrated the feast of Blessed Alphonsa Muttathupadathu, who will be canonized by Pope Benedict the XVI on 12 October 2008. The announcement of the canonization of Blessed Alphonsa Muttathupadathu *“is a call to Holiness, very significant for these times in which we live: Her life though short and brief was marked by suffering which had a ‘salvific dimension’*”. This was the reaction of **Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil**, Archbishop of Ernakulam-Angamaly, on the news that the Pope had approved the canonization of Blessed Alphonsa. *“By her suffering Love”*, he continues *“she was witness of her immense love for Christ and the Church. Her Suffering Love, her communion with the Suffering of Jesus Christ on the Cross and her offering of her suffering for the Church are model for the people of modern society”*.

Alphonsa was born on August 19, 1910 in Kudamaloor, a rural village near Kottayam to



Joseph and Mary Muttathupadathu. Nicknamed "Annakutty," she lost her mother early, and was raised by a maternal aunt. In 1923 Anna was badly burned on her feet when she fell into a pit of burning chaff. This accident left her permanently disabled. She arrived at the Poor Clare's convent at Bharananganam on Pentecost 1927. She received the postulant's veil on August 2, 1928 and took the name **Alphonsa**. In December, 1936 she was miraculously cured from her ailments through the intervention of Saint Therese of Lisieux and Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara. On June 14, 1939 she was struck by a severe attack of double pneumonia, which left her weakened and later she

died on July 28, 1946 after a painful illness.

On February 8, 1986 Pope John Paul II beatified her at Kottayam. On June 1, 2007 Pope Benedict XVI authorized her canonization, the proceedings of which will be completed on October 12, 2008. When the church officially declares her a saint, Blessed Alphonsa of the Immaculate Conception will become the first woman and the second saint from

India, the first being Saint Gonsalo Garcia, a Franciscan lay brother from Bassein, now Vasai, near Mumbai. Gonsalo Garcia suffered martyrdom by crucifixion in 1597 in Nagasaki, Japan and Pope Pius IX canonized him in 1862.

## 2. Visitation to the Philippines

Together with Fr. Johny Kanjiramparambil I visited our Philippine Mission from July 10 to 25, 2008. The first missionaries landed on the Philippine soil on 22 September 1993. The avowed intention of the then Superior General Fr. Emile Mayoraz was to implant the Congregation in the Philippines and thereby to expand the missionary potential of the Congregation and to give it more internationality. It was a difficult task for our Indian confreres to stand the test of time and the prevalent prejudices against the Indians as money lenders (who are derogatively nicknamed "five-six") and are used by mothers to hold the children from crying that the five-six will come and carry them away. The Indian money lenders give five pesos in the morning and collect six pesos in the evening from the poor and oppressed sections of the people. Our confreres with their hard work and affable nature have imprinted in the mind of our Catholics a strong impression of their deep faith and commitment to the cause of Christ and function as a counter witness to the money lenders. So much so that the Filipinos who have come into contact with us believe that there are two groups of people in India, the five-sixes and the wonderful Priests and Catholics of India.



The Filipinos are very hospitable, welcoming, respectful and affable people and you feel good to be in a country where 80-90% of the population is catholic. They hold their priests in high esteem and are very cooperative with them. We can feel this respect and regard for priests also as foreigners in this country and as Ate Yolly said, "irrespective of where they come from, we love them." We had lunch in the home of Ate Yolly and that was the experience of being at

the home of the MSFS. Ate Mendy also was present and they told us the story of their falling in love with the Fransalians. Ate Beth and Ate Linda from the Parish of Bagong Silang took us out for a Diner and expressed their love and concern for us. 'Ate' means Sister and that is the way they call especially women who are elder to them. Kuya means brother.

Our confreres in the Philippine mission are very resourceful people and our visits to them and the mission was definitely a source of support and appreciation for them and for the wonderful mission they carry out there. The formation of two catholic communities as Parishes in Bagong Silang and at Molino and the construction of the Churches in these two places bear witness to the commitment of our confreres to the local Church. The

Mission in the Philippines has never been a financial burden to the Province as they through their hard work and pastoral commitment earn enough financial resources for the support of the mission especially of the formation. Part of the finances come from the “Friends of the Fransalians”. Fr. Mayoraz had supported this mission very much in the past especially for the creation of the infrastructure for the seminary and continues to support it. With the formation of the Novitiate Community we have now four communities in the Philippines.

**The mission needs:**

- To have more personnel to expand missionary apostolate of the Congregation of education, renewal of Christian faith (parish mission) etc.
- To generate funds to achieve the goal of establishing a school and to stretch its activities to the less privileged children
- To have a place of its own for the novitiate and the aspirancy. Now all stages of formation takes place in the same campus

**The Mission has the potential of:**

- Being established as a region of MSFS in the course of time in the only Catholic Country in Asia. We count on the first novices.
- Being a spring board in the future for expanding missionary activities to other countries of South East Asia

**The Mission has its own fears and apprehensions with regard to:**

- The survival rate of the seminarians
- Lack of funds for expanding the missionary activities and the increasing cost of formation.
- Desire to expand the missionary activities to other regions and islands like Visayas and Mindenao but experiencing the difficulty of being separated from other confreres now in Metro Manila and Silang area.

**a. Our Formation Houses at Silang Cavite**



We have now the first three novices in the novitiate at Silang Cavite under the leadership of Fr. Joy Kochupoovathummuttil. Fr. Joseph Pattarkalayil as the full-time Vocation Promoter has been able to net in four young men for the Congregation. They together with three postulants and a first year philosopher constitute the formation community at Silang Cavite, where Fr. Tito Puthuparambil is the Rector. After completing his M.A. in La Salle University he was

appointed to be the guide and director for the Seminarians. At this juncture I gratefully remember Fr. Francis Kizhakkethazhe who with his hard work has built this formation house and gave a distinct identity to the MSFS in Philippines. The road leading to our property was slushy and dirty and with his unenviable ability to get friends and to

influence people Fr. Joy got the road graded through the help of the Congressman and hopes to get it cemented by next year. Although engaged in formation the confreres never miss an opportunity to render pastoral services to our Parish in Molino and other places. The stipends they receive by their services are sources of income for the maintenance of the formation of the seminarians. The salaries of the confreres working in the parishes are also diverted to the Mission Fund for the work of formation. We firmly hope that the first novices will persevere in their vocation and will be the first MSFS from Philippines to enter the annals of its history. Please keep Jundie, Philemon and Jess in your prayers.

#### **b. Our Parish at Bagong Silang**

We had the opportunity to have an audience with, Rt. Rev. Antonio Tobias, the Bishop of Novaliches, our parish at Bagong Silang being part of this diocese. The Bishop is full of appreciation for the single minded devotion of our confreres who work for the well-being of the parish. The people of Bagong Silang in Kalookan City, one of the cities of Metro Manila have got their catholic identity through the MSFS, by our presence and commitment to their spiritual and material well-being. They still cherish memories of Fr. Mathew Kavithazhe, who went to Bagong Silang, then a slum area with about 100,000 Catholics with no one to spiritually care for them and with no Church of their own.

The good work started by Fr. Mathew was continued by Fr. Joy Kochupoovathumuttill who became the Parish Priest and served the people and their spiritual welfare for three years with Fr Jimmy Parayankuzhiyil as Assistant. He continued the construction of the Church, finished part of the construction and beautification of the sanctuary and got the Presbytery ready where our confreres could find a comfortable and good home. Fr. Sunny Punnakuzhiyil was appointed Parish Priest in June 2007 and is now busy completing the art work of the sanctuary and the remaining works at the Church and Presbytery. The construction of the Church in Philippines is a long term project and stretches out to many years. It is almost exclusively built with the finances contributed by the people and the Parish Priests together with the Parish Pastoral Council has to find always novel and creative ways of fund-raising. No outside help is solicited and the people are really generous. Fr. Jimmy has endeared himself to the youth and the Altar servers (known also as sacristans) and organizes programs to strengthen their faith and communicate to them moral and religious values. The fathers are fully involved in ministry such as renewal programs, livelihood program for the poor etc.

#### **c. School at Bagong Silang**

The Francis de Sales Academy, the elementary school has 306 children, in the nursery preparatory (LKG and UKG) and till grade 6. From 7<sup>th</sup> it is high school and the Bishop wants us to start the High School. The school is in the name of the Bishop and will go back to the diocese once we cease to do ministry in the Diocese. Fr. Mathew had bought the land and Fr. Joy started with the construction of the School. Today it is the pride of the area.

#### **d. Quasi Parish at Molino**

**Fr. George, the Parish Priest of St. Niño Church, in the Diocese of Imus is the friend of the MSFS** and is very concerned about the well-being of our confreres and the growth of MSFS in Philippines. It is from his Parish that the pastoral center of Our Lady of the

Sacred Heart at Molino was divided and entrusted to the care of MSFS. Fr. Jinu Pathiyakom was appointed as the Priest in charge at Molino with Fr. Jayraraj as Assistant. Our visit to the Bishop of Imus, Dr. Luis Antonio Tagle was very cordial and although a busy person, he spent a lot of time with us. Fr. Jinu initiated the construction of the Presbytery and Parish Church and through his hard work and the cooperation of the Parishioners he has been able to complete a great part of the Church. Still work is going on, but it is already declared a Quasi Parish and by May 2008 he hopes to get for it the Status of a full-fledged Parish. Fr. George still feels that the Parish is too large and has further to be divided and he is looking for priests who will take charge of the centre. (Molino with its substations have 13 Masses on Sundays.) He directed his request also to me to send more missionaries to Philippines. Fr. Jayraj fondly called as Jay, besides his pastoral commitment is directly responsible for the youth, the choir and the Knights of the Altar. He takes also classes for our candidates in the Formation House at Silang Cavite.

### **3. 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Profession of Fr. Devasia Kuzhuppil**



Fr. Devasia Kuzhuppil completed 60 years of consecrated life in the Congregation on 9 May 1949. Even in his 80s (he is now 84) he has the determination of a young confrere and is a powerhouse of energy. He is now completing the second floor of Charis Niketan, his cherished dream, to care for the senior citizens, especially those who need such care most and to have a place for missionaries when they retire. May God continue to bless him with good health and lots of grace.

### **4. Province Retreat 2008**

The retreat will be conducted in two sessions. One will be in **Charis Bhavan** from **Monday 15 to Friday 19 September 2009** and the second one in **IIS from Monday 6 to Friday 10 October 2008**. The retreat will start with the Eucharistic Celebration on Monday at 11.00 a.m. and will end with the Lunch on Friday. I am enclosing the registration for participation and I request you to send the same filled up to the Provincial's Office by 15<sup>th</sup> August 2008.

You can also confirm your participation either by sending a mail to [msfsbangalore@yahoo.com](mailto:msfsbangalore@yahoo.com) or by sending a message with your name to Fr. Jais under phone number **09448789121**. The Participation in the Province Retreat is obligatory and is a constitutional requirement and in case you have to absent yourself from the same for unavoidable reasons please get the necessary permission from the Provincial.

### **5. The Salesian Year**

As has been made known earlier by Fr. Superior General 2008 is the Salesian Year. Since the school year has started it was suggested in the Provincial Council that it is once again brought to the consciousness of the confreres and the communities. Fr. Henry is appointed as coordinator of the programs that need to be arranged in our centers. It is proposed that at least one Salesian Recollection be conducted in all the Apostolic



Communities with a resource person. There will be also special programs in the formation houses.. Please give him all the cooperation he requests

## 6. Mass intentions

Some confreres are not taking Mass intention from the Province and are not updating the Mass diary. It is mandatory for the confreres to celebrate Masses for the Province intentions. The confreres in Parish Ministry have special privileges if they are obliged to celebrate the Masses for the intentions of the Parishioners. But to the best of my knowledge there are only very few centers where such a situation exist. Please contact the Provincial Bursar for your mass intentions regularly.

## 7. Bon Voyage



a) **Fr. Roji Kuttivayalil** has left for England on 25<sup>th</sup> June to pursue his studies in Mass media and Communication in the University of West Minster. He is now staying with Fr. Benny in the Parish and the Bishop of Northampton will assign him a parish after two months. I want to make use of this opportunity to thank Fr. Roji from the very depth of my heart for the great service that he rendered as Secretary for one and half years. He was a constant source of support for me. I wish him all the best.



b) **Fr. Johny Puthiyaparambil** will be leaving to the United States to replace Fr. Kurian Karickal in our Syro-Malabar Parish in Atlanta. Fr. Kurian will be returning to India in the month of October to be the Director of Charis Bhavan. Fr. Johny has been rendering services in Charis Bhavan as Preacher, Counselor and Editor of Charis Jyothi for a number of years. I make use of this Opportunity to thank him for the wonderful service he has done and wish him all the best for his ministry to the Syro Malabar community at Atlanta.

## 8. Hearty Congrats to our New Priest, Fr. Shalbin Marottikudy msfs



**Shalbin Marottikudy** was born of Mr. M.D Vareed and Mrs. Mary on 26.12.1979 in Manjapra. After SSLC he joined for the orientation course at Sudhirvana in 1997. He continued his minor seminary training at SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor. He made his first religious profession on 11.06.2000 at Sannidhi, Mysore. He did his philosophy in Suvidya College and for Theology he was sent to SFS Vidyashram, Alwaye. He did one year regency at Charis Bhavan Community, Athirampuzha. Due to the accident his ordination had to be postponed and after doing diaconate ministry in Vattapara he was ordained a priest on **28. 06. 2008** at St. Sebastian's Church, Sehipuram in Ernakulam – Angamali Archdiocese by His Lordship

Mar Sebastian Adayanthrath. Now he is serving in the Archdiocese of Ernakulam – Angamaly as the assistant Vicar of the Forane Church, Muttom, Chertala.

### **9. The New Set of Salesian Recollections**

The new set of Salesian recollection has been printed and made available for personal use and the use for recollections in Apostolic Communities. The team who prepared this set of Recollections under the leadership of Fr. Anthony Mookenthottam deserves our appreciation and congratulation. In this Salesian Year let us specially take care to conduct these recollections.

### **10. New Name for the Chennai Province**

The Superior General has promulgated that henceforth the Chennai Province will be known as the **South East India Province**.

### **11. Promotion to the Sacred Order of Priesthood**

**Deacon M. Periya Nayagam** is due to be ordained *9<sup>th</sup> August 2008* in St. Antony's Church, Cowdally at 10.00 a.m. by Most Rev. Dr. Thomas Vazhapillil Bishop of Mysore. **Deacon Gijo Panamattathil** is due to be ordained Priest in the month of September 2008 in his home parish in St. Joseph Church, Pottemplavu near Kudianmala.

### **12. First Profession at Sannidhi**



On 11<sup>th</sup> June ten of our novices professed their religious vows in the presence of Provincial Rev. Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam in Sannidhi, Mysore. Presence of the parents and close relatives of the candidates along with the confreres and other religious made the occasion a solemn one. Bro. Abhishek who was admitted in the hospital and underwent an operation could make his profession only on in the presence of Fr.

Henry Jose, the Councilor in charge of Formation.

### **13. Scholastics in Formation**

We have this year 28 philosophers in formation: 7 third years, 5 second years and 9 first years in Suvidya, three in St. Peter's and four in Silang Cavite, Philippines. The total numbers of Theologians are 39: 9 deacons, 9 third years, 5 second years and 9 first years in Tejas and 2 deacons, 2 third years, 3 second years in Ngoya, Cameroon. There are 10 Regents two of whom are in Africa. There are 17 Novices, three of whom are in Philippines. J. Abhishek who could not join the philosophy course in Suvidya due to his illness has joined for B.com in Christajyanthi College, Bangalore.

### **14. Catholic/Christian Students in our Schools**

SFS Public School Ettumanoor has over 1000 Catholic students enrolled in the register. Hebbagodi English Medium with 233 has the largest number of Christians studying in

our schools in Karnataka and SFS School Kuknoor has none. Kannada Medium Hebbagodi has 39, ICSE has 62 children. Malur has 27 Catholics enrolled in the school and Koppal 19. Mundargi has 25 Catholics and Chintamani has 25 Christian students. Srinivaspur has 9 and Savanur has 1, Kannur has 10. In the Kannada Medium School at Kadisenahalli there are 13 catholic children. The PU College at Hebbagodi has 90 students and the Degree College has 125 out of 400 students.

### **15. New Accounting Package for the Province**

Fr. Tom Kanat has designed a user friendly and simple accounting package for the South West Province. This package is based on windows operating system, which is widely used at present. The procurators and those who deal with the finance are to get familiarized with the system and follow the same for better finance management. I would like to thank Fr. Tom for the personal interest he has taken in devising this program and installing it in different centers of the Province.

### **16. Please Note**

**-The Fax number of Provincial's Office is 080 23341329**

**-Since the Status is being updated and has to be printed soon** make correction in your personal data if any. Please bring also to the notice of the Provincial Secretary if there is any mistake in the Status 2006 either by mailing to [msfsbangalore@yahoo.com](mailto:msfsbangalore@yahoo.com) or calling Fr. Jais, Mobile No. 09448789121.

### **17. Transfers and Appointments**

**a. Fr. Tomy Chirackalpuraidom** is appointed to the Community at Vinayakumar Ashram.

**b. Fr. Jose Maliekal** is assigned to the community at MSFS House, Kannur. He is awaiting news about his visa for the United States. Fr. Jose had some problem regarding his stay in the US as he had shifted from the Diocese of Birmingham to the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Such shifting in the US is only possible after one has returned to his home country. Fr. Jose did not do that and so he has to wait to get the papers cleared to again legally stay in the United States.

**c. Fr. Shalbin Marottikudy** is appointed by His Beatitude Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil to be Assistant Parish Priest at Muttom. His Address is: St. Mary's Forane Church, Muttom, Chertala 688 524, Phone 0478/2812579

**d. Fr Prashanth Kumar** is appointed by the Bishop of Chickmagalur as Assistant Parish Priest. His address is: St. Roque's Church, Santaveri P.O, Tarikere, Chickmagalur 577 137. Mob.09740705281.

**e. Fr. Victor Kujur** is appointed by the Bishop of Belgaum as Assistant Parish Priest in Santibastwad. His address is: St. Sebastian's Church, Santibastwad Post, Belgaum 590 014. Mob. 09916195855.

### **18. On holidays**

**Fr. Philip Valakodiyil** was in India for his holidays in the beginning of July. **Fr. James Mukalel** is on holidays and for rest and ayurvedic treatment in Kerala. **Fr. George Chirayil** is on holidays. **Fr. Bobby** has arrived from Austria for his first home holidays. **Deacons Gijo Panamattathil and M.Periyanayagom** are in India for their holidays and



are due to be ordained. Brothers **Sandeep and Lawrence** are on holidays from Cameroon and will make their Perpetual Profession.

#### **19. Let us pray for the Sick**

- a. **Fr. Thayil** who is now recuperating from the operation after his accident
- b. Please continue to pray for **Fr. Thomas Mattakarathundiyl** who is very optimistic and positive about himself and his life.
- c. **Fr. Devasia Kalapura** who is admitted in Manipal Hospital since he has developed problems with his kidneys.
- d. **Sister of Bro. Praful Tigga** who underwent an operation for Kidney problems in Vellore Hospital.

#### **20. Let us pray for the Departed**

- a. **Fr. Joseph Puthenkulam** (30.01.1928 – 05.06.2008) of Nagpur Province expired on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008. Please fulfill the prescribed suffrages.
- b. Fr. Joseph Vettukattil lost his father **Mr. Varkey**, aged 98 on 22.06.2008.
- c. Fr. Vinoy Valachathinakathu lost his paternal uncle **Mr. Mathew**, aged 61 on 20.06.2008.
- d. Bro. Anand Ekka(third Year theology) lost his Father **Mr. Paschal Ekka** on 12.06.2008.

#### **21. Visit to missions in Philippines: Impressions and Perspectives by Fr. Johny Kanjiramparambil, Councilor in-charge of mission**

In view of clarifying our missionary priorities and strengthening our mission in Philippines, as Councillor in charge of the Mission, I had an opportunity to accompany Fr. Provincial Mathew Kozhuppakalam to visit our confreres and the concerned bishops in Philippines from July 10 – 26, 2008.

Our mission in Philippines will be fifteen years old by September 20, 2008. It was pioneered by Frs. Mathew Kavithazha and Francis Kizhakkethazhe in 1993. Now there are eight Indian confreres in four communities. The vision and mission of the MSFS in Philippines are to implant our congregation there by establishing permanent communities with various apostolates in the spirit and spirituality of St. Francis de Sales by promoting local vocations and forming them as MSFS. The sign of hope is seen as they are eleven local candidates out of which three are novices, three are postulants, two in Philosophy and four are in the orientation.

The Country is comprising of a group more than 7000 beautiful Islands and divided into three regions viz. Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. They speak predominantly Tagalong (Philipino). The plants, trees, animals and climate is like that of Kerala. The people are beautiful, friendly, hospitable, gentle in their ways, polite in their manners, but most of them are economically backward. They have high respects for the priests. Our confreres under the leadership of the mission superior Fr. Sunny Punnakuzhiyil are working hard to bring up our mission and to implant our congregation there. They need more stable and persevering local vocations, more personnel's, more centers of our own, more houses of formation and its infrastructure and more financial stability and co-ordination. In spite of all these initial drawbacks the mission in Philippines will continue to flourish in the

future. The visit of Fr. Provincial Mathew and mine which I think has boosted them in their missionary commitment and dedication and has facilitated better co-ordination. They need our prayers, moral support and encouragements. I thank them for their intense hospitality rendered to us and I thank all of you for your prayerful support.

**Fr. Johny Kanjirampampil, MSFS**

## **Glances from the Life of the Province**

*Formation News Capsules: Compiled by Bro. Sudeep Paul*

**Ministries of Deacons:** Sharing the word of God, pastoral house visits, preaching in family unit meetings, administering the sacraments, assisting at the Liturgy and familiarizing with the functioning of the parish summed up the activities of Nine Deacons from Tejas Vidya Peetha during their deaconate ministry in the months of April and May. ‘Learning by doing’ goes a maxim, it was a good learning experience for me as I was exposed to real life situations. Doing ministry at Viveknagar, one of the Shrines of Bangalore Archdiocese, I could meet various people, broken and dejected in life because of their strained relationship in marriage, some youth so confused with their life’s problems and few old people experiencing rejection from their own children, I could speak to them and know their pain and offer some consolation; opined Br. Bipin Xess. The deacons did their ministry in various parishes of Karnataka and Kerala.

**Personality Development Courses:** Second year theologians of Tejas Vidya Peetha attended personality development programmes at Kotagiri and Dindigul. Healing the inner child was held at Kotagiri for one-week and a one-month counselor training programme in Anugraha at Dindigul. Counselors’ training at Anugraha promoted a personal regard and respect within a style of counseling and care which is non-judgmental, nondirective and of a reflective nature opined Bro. Lalu Jose. The program integrated theory and application with a wide range of topics including personal growth, self-analysis and self-actualization, said Bro. Martin. The Program also provided with counseling skill practice, theory, personal therapy, group therapy and self-analysis: (personality tests) and so on said Bro. Anish. “It was an enriching experience where we could shed off our ill-feelings and personal problems and were able to gain knowledge about counseling skills,” said Bro. Subin. Generally all of them felt that it was an eye opener for them to reflect on religious life and grow more in commitment to serve the needy with love and affection.

**Cultural Immersion Program:** Nine first year theologians of Tejas Vidya Peetha were sent to different families, in Kerala and Karnataka as part of Cultural Immersion Program [CIP] for one month. CIP is a programme wherein students are initiated into a process of theologizing in the context. The students were sent to a different culture from that of their own. All were of the opinion that it exposed them to the concrete situations of the people and the structures of the society. They could experience in first-hand the inconvenience, poverty and the struggles of family life. All expressed that, they were well accepted in the families and were able to feel one with them in their own way.

**Suvidya:** Posing a question to the newly professed of the province on what impressed them to choose the religious way of life; all of them unanimously agreed that was to follow Christ more closely and freely. A few of their impressions follow: **Noby Varghese** was of the opinion that religious life would help him to become more holy and faithful by way of practicing evangelical counsels. **Joseph O. T.** took to this way of life to sacrifice his ideas and values for the love of God. **Sojan Sebastian** opines he can lead a life of self emptiness and render selfless service. **Balan Bruno** wants to tirelessly work for the salvation of souls and live an exemplary life by

being all to all. **Anishmon Joseph** expects to deepen his baptismal commitment. **Joel** feels this way of life would help him to lead a life of sacrifice and true commitment. **Josemon John** believes that this life pleases God and he can be a man of prayer and a God experienced person etc. **Baldhir Minz's** love for God and people made him opt for this way of life. **Nirmal** expressed that he can be a man of deep spirituality and knowledge. **Abhishek** hopes to attain holiness by following the evangelical counsels and want to impart it others.

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*News Capsules from other Formation houses: compiled by Fr. Jais Mecheril*

**SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor: 26 new candidates** from various parts of Kerala joined SFS Seminary and with few repeating the course there are 29 in the first year. 21 students are from Malabar 8 from South Kerala. Congratulations to our Vocation Promoters: Frs. Binoy Kuzhuppil, Anil Thondampallil and others who helped and supported them. The total numbers of students in SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor are 69.

**Saumya Sadan: Twelve candidates from various parts of Karnataka** have begun their formation at Saumya Sadan, Mysore. Congratulations to our Vocations Promoters Frs. Selvaraj, Jabamala and Rajkumar. From the last batch of Orientation course in Saumya Sadan, 7 have gone to SFS Ettumanoor and one has entered the Novitiate.

**Divya Jyothi Ashram, Latapara:** Our Vocation promoters under the leadership of Fr. Francis Ekka were successful in getting 5 candidates from Chattisgarh. 3 are from Raigarh diocese and 2 from Ambikapur and have joined the Divya Jyothi Seminary at Latapara.

**Silang Cavite Philipines:** Fr. Joseph Pattarkalayil could make 4 students enthusiastic to join the MSFS in Philipines. Three viz: Asel, Marcelino and Joiner are from Mindenao and Isias is from Luzon region

**SFS Seminary, Ettumanoor:** Fr. Provincial admitted **18 candidates on 30<sup>th</sup> June to Postulancy** in SFS Seminary Ettumanoor in a simple ceremony. 12 are third years and 6 are second years who have completed their plus two. They are: Immanuel J.Balu, Kavukattu Jibin George, Kezhakkanputhippillil Jithin Kurian, Myalil Jobin Joseph, Neyambakulam Joshy N. Gerorge, Panachickal Justin Joseph, Mannumaliyil Justin Mathew, Chennikkara Manu Jose, Koottunkal Manu George, Vettikkattil Mobin Mathew, Kumpakkal Pradeep Joseph, Parayaruthottam Praveen Cyriac, Thekkeparambil Sabin Joseph, Dominic Hridaya Raj, Rajawal Tirkey, Jugal Tirkey, Vallapurackal Mintu Abraham, Kappithottam Sanoj and C, Kovilparambil Sijo Paul.

**Silang Cavite Philipines:** In a simple ceremony attended by all the confreres in Philipines and Fr. Johny Kanjiramparambil Fr. Provincial admitted **Noel Tattoy, Kirby Homo and Nathaniel Masendo** into postulancy on 21 July 2008.

**Gada Mabanga, Cameroon:** We expect three postulants this year and a small house is being constructed in Gada Mabanga/Djalango near N'Gaoundere. Fr. Thomas Payattukandam is the Rector of the house.

***Other News of the Province: compiled by Fr. Jais***

**Srinivaspur:** A long cherished desire of the MSFS Community House at Srinivaspur to have a community house of its own came true on Saturday 21 June. The house was formally inaugurated and blessed by Provincial in the presence of the Apostolic Community at Kolar, the teachers of the School and some friends and leaders of the locality.



**NEST: Kengeri:** Four houses built for the children's village has been given for use on 20 July 2008. Confreres from Bangalore City were present for the function. There are now 28 children in the village most of whom are Catholics.

**St. Francis de Sales Degree College, Hebbagodi**

For the first time almost all the allotted seats for the college is filled up except for B.A. program. We remain hopeful and optimistic.

**SFS PU College, Hebbagodi:** The DDPI has allotted 100 more seats for commerce and 100 seats for Arts to the PU College this year. We hope that the seats will be filled up by new admissions.

**SFS ICSE School, Hebbagodi:** Tiny tots, (L.K.G. Students) of SFS ICSE School were welcomed to the beginning of their academic life in a novel way by the senior students and were presented with small gifts.

Rev. Fr. Roy, the Principal exhorted the school leaders and the house captains of the academic year 2008–2009 to be the role models for the other students.

**SFS Public School & Junior College, Ettumanoor:** The National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions in New Delhi has granted *Minority Status to SFS Public School & Junior College, Ettumanoor*. A certificate to this effect issued by the Secretary of the Commission was received at the school with effect from 02<sup>nd</sup> July 2008

**SFS School, Hebbagodi:** In view of imparting quality education in the school we have started from this year a third division in the school from I to IX Std. To make sure that sufficient funds are available for paying the salary there was a substantial hike in the fee structure.

**SFS School Koppal:** Finally we can go ahead with the construction of the SFS ICSE School in Koppal after the land has been cleared of all issues concerning envisaged public roads through the property. Congratulations to our fathers in Koppal.

**SFS School, Srinivaspur:** There was a rush for admission to the school as the school scored a 100% result in the Public Exams. A new division was started as the admissions were good during the last years and still there is great demand.

**SFS Kannada Medium Schools Chintamani and Kadisenahalli**

Both the schools are applying for Grant-in Aid for six teachers each. We are hopeful of getting the same which will substantially lighten the burden of the Province.

**One Minute with St. Francis de Sales**

The Declared and Permissive Will at the Present Moment. *"We unite ourselves with the declared will of God when we do ordinary daily duties, little ordinary monotonous actions of day-to-day life. The permissive will of God daily opens up a very vast number of little, insignificant and often unseen actions, very valuable before God as long as love inspires them. Such are: 'accommodating oneself to another's moods; patiently bearing rude behavior, overcoming our moods; trying to overcome dislike for people or things; gladly recognizing our imperfections; trying to preserve peace of soul, graciously accepting criticism; sharing; the company we keep the things we do.'* This is what Saint Theresa of Child Jesus and Blessed Alphonsa did." From Fr. Anthony Mookenthottam, *Ever Flowing Streams of Love*, 1997, pp. 179-180

Yours Sincerely,

*Mathew Kozhuppakalam*

Fr. Mathew Kozhuppakalam MSFS  
Provincial





## CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

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9<sup>th</sup> July 2008

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### FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

My Dear Confreres,

Each of you engaged in the works of the Lord entrusted to your care is a source of strength , blessings and inspiration to our Fransalian family. Recall to mind those confreres whom you have never met nor have you seen or perhaps you will never meet. You are as close to them as you would be to those whose life you share .There is a bond that transcends space and time .There is a radical option to follow Jesus in the way of Fr Mermier in the spirit of St Francis de Sales that knits us together into a family of God's Spirit. I greet you and bring to you the encouragement and joy of our common vocation .Let us always go to the sources from where to drink the pure, crystal energising waters of life: God's Word, Salesian Spirituality and our Constitutions . You can be sure that every faithfilled return to these sources will be an explosion of renewal and your valued contribution to the life and mission of the Congregation.

### SIGN- POSTS AHEAD

Looking forward in the next few months , I see sign -posts of great significance to the Church and to the Congregation:

**Feast of the Mother of Compassion on 15<sup>th</sup> September** : Mary is the symbol of all that one becomes when God is the center of one's life. Love is his driving force and God's plan his daily work.How beautiful and graceful to stand with hope ,courage and confidence amidst the imponderables of our own life and that of others ! Let us stand beside Mother Mary beneath the Cross of Jesus !

**Founder's Day, 30<sup>th</sup> September** : Linked with our spiritual Father, Peter Mermier, we inherit in seedform the original God-experience of this saintly man and which gave birth to our Congregation. This seed sown in our times , in varieties of cultures , countries and apostolates makes the charism of our Congregation come alive .It is a gift to the Church and the society. May we always live fully present today and fully rooted in the heart of Fr Mermier.

**Canonisation of Sr Alphonsa:** The Canonisation of Sr Alphonsa in Rome on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2008 is a harbinger of the grace of God at work in the hearts of simple ordinary religious who have left a trail of sanctity amidst the humdrum of life . She is an example for all to imitate. Coming as Sr Alphonsa does from India, the country where we have so many Fransalians , it is an event that we will treasure with special delight and pray for the Church in India.

**The Synod on the Word of God :** In October 2008 the Synodal Bishops will gather in Rome to assist the Church to rediscover the primacy of the Word of God in our lives and to enable us to use its power and light to build a better world .Let us pray that the Lord may spare us “the famine for the word of God “ and that He may give us “ a real hunger “ for His Word .

**Foundation Day, 24th October :** On 24<sup>th</sup> October 2008, our Congregation will complete 170 years of its existence. Founded in 1838, we have travelled in time and continents faithful to the command of the Lord Jesus to proclaim the Good News . Fr Mermier has asked us to follow the example of St Francis de Sales in our works for the Church . The checkered history of our Congregation, at times apparently unplanned, but dotted with the precious blood and witness of the exemplary lives of confreres of today and yesteryears is a project of God at the service of humanity .Let the Foundation Day be dedicated to the memory of our senior retired priests .Let us extole the marvels God has done through their lives. Let us light a candle each in remembrance of the confreres who have died in the past year as a mark of respect and gratitude . I will appreciate if each community ,under the guidance of the Provincial, takes an initiative in this direction.

**In the year 2013, the Congregation will celebrate 175 years of its existence.** It is good for us to make use of this occasion for refounding ourselves in our sources and in our roots. It is not too early to make remote united planning to make the occasion an impetus of growth and renewal. Please feel free to share your ideas with the local superiors, and provincials so that when we take up the preparation for this event , your contribution will be a tremendous help.

## APPOINTMENTS

During the General Council Meeting held in Rome from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> June 2008, the following appointments were finalised:

**Fr Thomas Olickal,** Provincial of East Africa Province for a second term of three years beginning from 15<sup>th</sup> July 2008. The East Africa province is in the process of diversification of ministries . Besides vast missions entrusted to the confreres, major initiatives have been made in ministry for street children and children of AIDS parents, orphanage, women empowerment programmes and skill training centers. Possibilities of new initiatives demand personnel for which the Province needs temporary assistance from the other Provinces. There is urgency to have at least two member communities in some places. All these concerns known and attended to by Fr Thomas Olickal will find greater attention as he begins his second term .

**Fr Mario DSouza**, Provincial of Pune Province for a second term of three years beginning from 10<sup>th</sup> August 2008. Besides the pastoral and educational ministry in which a sizeable number of confreres are engaged in, the Province has built up sufficient good infra-structure for specialised ministries in taking care and educating the street children, the mentally and physically challenged, empowerment of rural people and educating them in computer and communication skills. The Province is in the process of discernment to establish a new mission in Africa. Ongoing efforts to strengthen community, religious life and formation are also an important concern of the Province. This mandate will enable Fr Mario to help the members to intergrate these concerns into the wider vision of the Province

**Fr Sebastian Annaikandathil**, Provincial of Nagpur Province for the first term of three years beginning from 15<sup>th</sup> August 2008. Due to the need of sufficient time to handover charge of his present responsibilities in Mozambique, Fr Sebastian has requested to take charge from 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008. I have granted the request. Consequently, the term of Fr Joseph Pulloppillil as provincial of Nagpur has been extended till 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008. Fr Sebastian Annaikandathil is 64 years old, 40 years a religious, and 36 years a priest. He has been a Provincial councillor, educator, formator and a pioneering missionary. His experiences and insights into various apostolates and in religious life will enable him to guide the Province to respond to the missionary and religious needs of the Congregation.

**Fr Joseph Pulloppillil** completes two terms of his mandate as Provincial of Nagpur Province. The Province was engaged in res-structuring of some of the formation houses, and mission centres. Initiatives for renewal of religious life and to respond to the call of Mission in a territory that is not receptive to direct evangelisation have been the constant preoccupation of the members and of the Provincial. Regular yearly perpetual professions and priestly ordination of confreres is a sign of greater availability in the vineyard of the Lord. Much has been done which serves as a base on which the members can rely to look forward with hope and confidence. I am very grateful to Fr Joseph Pulloppillil for his leadership, self-gift, availability, animation, and guidance to the members of the Congregation.

We assure the newly appointed Provincials, Fr Thomas Olickal, Fr Mario and Fr Sebastian of our confidence, prayers and fraternal encouragement and support.

### **GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR MISSIONS**

The office of the General Secretariat for Missions will be established at Fransalian Seminary, Pune. The presence of the General Secretary, Fr Thumma Mariadas at Pune will enable him to be more effective in his role. I thank the Provincial of Pune, Fr Mario DSouza, for gladly accepting this proposal and for all the assistance he will give to the General Secretary, through the local community of Fransalian Seminary, to establish the office of the Secretariat.

### **SACERDOTAL GOLDEN JUBILEE OF FR KURIAN ARANJANIYIL**

On 1st June 2008 , Fr Kurian Aranjaneyil, the present Procurator to the Holy See , and the local superior of our Rome Community started the Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee Year. On 2nd June 2008 Fr Kurian, in the company of the General Curia and the Apostolic Community of Italy and friends and benefactors , offered Thanksgiving Mass in the Vatican City . He was then felicitated during lunch .Fr Thomas Cherukat took us down the memory lane recalling the saga of achievements and efforts of Fr Kurian in the Congregation. This Jubilee Year is a pause of deep gratitude of Fr Kurian to God for the gift of priesthood which he has lived with zeal and commitment for the past 50 years.It is an opportunity for us to let Fr Kurian know that we are proud to have him as our confrere, our Procurator and our local superior. We owe him profound gratitude for all the services he has rendered as MSFS , be it in formation ministry, socio-developmental ministry, administration or in establishing a network of benefactors at the service of the missions of the Congregation. Our presence in Rome owes much to him as he was the first one who took the initiative to convince the General Administration to have a house of its own in Rome . He worked tirelessly to establish the house as well as to form the first community of MSFS in Rome. When the Generalate was shifted to Rome in July 2002, he was there to welcome the Superior General and his Secretary and do everything possible to ensure that we could function well . I personally owe him gratitude for his understanding and generosity .

Wherever Fr Kurian went, it was his major preoccupation to give relevant service in keeping with the needs of the people.It is no surprise ,therefore, that he started Social, Human ,Educational and Developmental Programmes for the disadvantaged people. He not only started these programmes but ensured that there were structures that would carry on this service in a professional way. Hence the establishment of Pastoral and Social Institute at Hyderabad, Malur and Kengeri. His concern has always been to bridge the gap between the celebration of sacraments and celebration of life, of breaking bread at the altar and breaking oneself in the service of God's people. These efforts of Fr.Kurian become a part of the missionary heritage of our Congregation.

On behalf of the entire Congregation I once again greet Fr Kurian and heartily congratulate him on completing 50 years as a priest. I am thankful to all the members of the Apostolic Community of Italy who with the greatest care to all details prepared the Liturgy as well as the get-together and made 3rd June 2008 a memorable day for Fr Kurian.

#### **VISITATIONS BY THE SUPERIOR GENERAL AND ASSISTANT GENERAL**

As I have informed you earlier, the two visitations of each Province/Region/Mission within 6 years will be undertaken by the Superior General and Assistant General in turn. The visitation will be followed by a very important interaction between the General Curia and Provincial Curia to ensure a very comprehensive assessment of the religious life and apostolates of the Province . To prepare well for this exercise, the General Council has approved the following procedure:

The Provincial Councillor in Charge of each secretariat will submit a report to the General Councillor ( Secretary) in charge of the respective secretariat by a definite date

This report is however to be routed through the respective provincials. Therefore it is the provincial who will forward the report to the respective Secretary.

A proforma will be prepared by the respective Secretary and sent to the Provincial Councillor in Charge to facilitate a comprehensive but graphic presentation of the report. The report should focus mainly on the following aspects:

- Statistics,
- The planning of projects and programmes. Are they being implemented through the community?
- Concrete proposals and plans for the future. Are they known to all in the province?
- Difficulties and Challenges involved. Are they surmountable? Is there any hope?
- Any suggestion to have an effective networking with the different ministries in the province and in other provinces (ex. A common criteria for vocation promotion!)

Each Secretary will send the Report on the Apostolate to all the members of the General Curia before the Visitation starts .

The Provincial will send all the reports of all the forums to each of the Provincial Councillors

The following modalities of interaction between the General Curia and the Provincial Curia have been proposed:

Day 1 : Each Provincial Councillor in charge gives a highlight of his report prioritizing the issues. There is no reading of the full text.

The Provincial gives his assessment of the life and mission of the Congregation as lived in the Province.

Day 2. Responses from the participants to arrive at pointers of concrete direction in the context of the life of the Province.

The Visitations commence from October 2008 as per the schedule circulated to the Provincials . To ensure its effectiveness I request your prayers so that we may truly be instruments of God' grace , discernment and encouragement to the various Provinces/Regions/Missions of our Congregation.

#### **NEW NAME FOR CHENNAI PROVINCE : SOUTH EAST INDIA PROVINCE**

By a formal decree dated 7<sup>th</sup> July 2008 and approved by the General Council in its meeting of June Meeting 2008, I have made known to Chennai Province and the entire Congregation that Chennai Province which came into existence on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2008 will be known as **SOUTH-EAST INDIA PROVINCE** with effect from 15<sup>th</sup> August 2008. The temporary headquarters of the Province will be at Puddukkotai till a definite decision is taken about more permanent headquarters. The new name was proposed by the 1<sup>st</sup> Provincial Congress of the Province ; a decision to that effect was taken by the Provincial Council and forwarded to the Superior General for his approval and Decree.



### **THIRD GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN ROME**

For the first time the General Council Meeting was held in Rome at the new Generalate house , Via delle Testuggini from 3<sup>rd</sup> June to 8<sup>th</sup> June 2008. The occasion was an opportunity to see the functionality of this house for such purposes . It also gave us an occasion to introduce the generalate team to the group of faithful ( average 20) who frequent Holy Mass every Sunday in our Chapel. The visit of the Parish priest and informal interaction with him gave us an idea of possible ministry we could have if we have confreres proficient in Italian in the generalate community. The team along with the members of the Rome community undertook a pilgrimage on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2008 to Treviso Monastery of the Visitation where the heart of St Francis de Sales is kept and honoured.

The exemplary, fraternal ,attentive and united effort of the community at Via delle Testuggini , specially that of Fr Varghese Chettupuzha and Fr Philip Vadakodiyil in organising all the services, both material and spiritual ,was indeed a joyful and fraternal experience to the Team. The General Curia members and I are sincerely grateful to them.

#### **MEETING WITH THE CONFRERES GERMANY,AUSTRIA AND HOLLAND (GAH)**

The confreres in Germany-Austria and Holland had their annual Retreat at Neumarkt, Germany in July 2008 with 46 members present. After the Retreat they met, as a group, the Superior General and the Assistant General on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> July 2008 to understand the Directives of the 18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter and to see how they can be implemented. The group has elected 5 members to represent them to liaison with the Assistant General who will in course of time present to the Provincials concerned and the General Council ways in which the presence of the confreres in the three countries can be more effectively organised.

Since the terms of the Coordinator of Fransalians in Germany and that of most of the Animators of the eight apostolic communities were to end soon, the group agreed that all the new appointments can be made following due processes in the near future. The General Council will take up this matter in the course of the next two or three months.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Fr Jose Karickal who for the last 4 years has been the Coordinator of Fransalians in GAH. Through his services of arranging meetings, retreats, sharing communications and communiqués , representing the group at different forums and keeping me regularly informed of the situation there, he has ensured that the organisation of the confreres as 8 apostolic communities worked and brought unity and understanding. I thank him sincerely. Also each of the 8 animators of the Apostolic community deserve our gratitude .They gathered the confreres in prayer, fraternal companionship, study and reflection with a view to promote communion and strengthen fraternal bonds

## MEETING OF THE CONFRERES IN GERMAN SPEAKING SWITZERLAND

There are 7 confreres belonging to different Provinces in German-speaking Switzerland. From Germany, I proceeded to Chur, Switzerland, to meet them. Unfortunately most of them were on holiday or some assignment and I could meet only a few of them. As per the wish of the 18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter and of the Provincials concerned, initial step has been taken to ensure that in course of time there will be an apostolic community of the confreres in German-speaking Switzerland. Fr Cyriac Nellikunnel at present is the Superior General's contact person for these confreres. He did his best to gather the confreres together and to have a good interaction with those who were present. I am deeply grateful to him for his hospitality and the arrangements he made for the visit.

## THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE

During the Assembly of the Union of Superiors General in May 2008, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CVCSVA) released a very important and significant Instruction entitled "**The Service of Authority and Obedience**". The document is available in English in most Catholic book shops. Having read it and studied and reflected on it in the company of the Superiors General of other Congregations, I am confident to say to you that reading this document and allowing it to inspire and animate us in our service of authority and obedience, will make us really free, responsible, joyful and united religious. It is indeed a document of profound education to superiors, formators, students in formation, to every religious who wishes to find meaning and joy in surrendering his will to God's Will in the dynamics of discernment through authority and obedience.

The document speaks of basic truth of our existence, namely, obedience to God's word which said "**BE**" and we said "**YES**" and came into being. All authority and obedience is rooted in this fundamental obedience. . . Obedience is to God alone. Those in authority as much as those who obey equally seek the will of God. Therefore authority is service for true discernment of God's Will. In depth and with practical suggestions and thoughts, the document convinces us of the very options that we made at the time of our Profession.

*What are the criteria of discernment, and how do we go about it ?*

*How can Authority be at service of consecration?*

*How can Authority be at the service of communion and community ?*

*How can Authority be at the service of Mission ?*

Those, who have queries like these, will find resounding and convincing answers that unleash new vision and new energy of living in a religious community.

I urge every local community to obtain this booklet and read it personally and if possible collectively. This study will further enable us to implement the Action Plan of the 18<sup>th</sup> General Chapter more vigourously.

## GROWTH CONSTITUTION RETREAT

Most of us in the Congregation took part in the Constitution Initial Retreat. It revealed to us the spiritual and animational treasures that lie hidden in our book of life as MSFS community. The Committee appointed to organise Constitution Growth Retreat under the leadership of Fr Jacob Parappally is engaged in preparing the first Retreat of its kind for the members of the Committee, for the Provincials and the General Curia. The Retreat will take place at Ross Hill, Visakhapatnam from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Fr Jacob will contact all concerned and provide more details of the preparation. For the time being it suffices for all of us involved in this exercise of far-reaching consequences, to note the dates and the venue of the retreat.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion let me assure you that I share with you the joy of the coming events in the Church and in the Congregation. Happy Feast of our Mother of Compassion on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

Greetings to all of you on our Founder's Day on 30<sup>th</sup> September. Prayerful intercession for each of you through the saintly Sr Alphonsa. "Thank you" to our senior confreres for their life and works as we remember them on the Foundation Day, 24<sup>th</sup> October.

And Rest and Peace of God to those confreres who are no more with us. May the Word of God be a lamp to guide our steps!

Blessings of God on you and on all that you do  
Yours devotedly



Fr Agnelo Fernandes, MSFS  
Superior General